

**City of Belmont
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING NOVEMBER 6, 2013
MINUTES**

The regular meeting of the Belmont Parks & Recreation Commission of November 6, 2013 was called to order at 7:02 p.m. at the Belmont City Hall Council Chambers.

I. ROLL CALL

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair (CC) Wright, Vice Chair Wong, Commissioner (C) Block, Bortoli, Youth Commissioner (YC) Singer, C Sullivan, Michaels and YC Fox

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Runyan

STAFF PRESENT: Parks and Recreation Director (PRD) Gervais and Secretary Saggau

CC Wright introduced new Youth Commissioner Alex Singer. YC Singer expressed gratitude for the opportunity to serve on the Commission.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

C Wong moved, seconded by C Michaels, to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of October 2, 2013. Vote 7 in favor, CC Wright abstained.

III. PUBLIC COMMUNICATION/COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRD Gervais announced the following:

- Holiday Craft Faire will be held in Twin Pines Park on November 23 and 24. This year the faire will expand into the Manor Building.
- City Council reorganization meeting will be held on December 10.
- There will be an exhibit at the Manor Building consisting of the artists that rent studios in the building.

IV. AGENDA AMENDMENTS

None.

V. OLD BUSINESS

- a. **Continuing Discussion of Twin Pines Park Including Recent Improvements, Programming at the Manor House, and Strategy for Future Planning.**

PRD Gervais reported the Commission took a tour of Twin Pines Park at their July meeting and discussed improvements for the park. He noted the Parks Crew completed some improvements

on the walkways to repair trip hazards in the park. Work on the Twin Pines Senior/Community Center Improvement Project started and the exterior has been painted. He noted some dry rot was discovered in the roof and that has been fixed. Painting continues indoors and is being completed at night when the Center is closed. Improvements to the waste removal system in the park have been completed with the addition of new waste enclosures that separate waste, recycling and compost.

PRD Gervais noted that future plans for improvements include removing the asphalt next to the Parks & Recreation office and expanding the grass area next to the Buckeye Picnic Area. The addition of tables next to this playground is being considered. A new roof on the restroom is also needed.

PRD Gervais stated no major changes for the Manor House are proposed at this time. The current programming appears to be working and it has been open more during community events.

PRD Gervais explained the Manor Building would be included in the long term plans for the park. He reviewed the issues listed in the staff report that would be part of the planning for the future of Twin Pines Park. Once the Barrett AD-Hoc Committee completes their work staff proposes a new Ad-Hoc committee be formed to begin the planning process for Twin Pines.

PRD Gervais responded to Commission questions:

- Some brick pathway was removed because of trip hazards. Asphalt was used in an area where the asphalt was lifted by tree roots.
- Older trash bins were removed in Twin Pines but the ones in good shape were kept.
- Barbeques installed by the small picnic sites may be considered for removal in the future as they are rarely used.
- Both historical items and artists' work have been integrated into the Manor House. In the future the question of what is appropriate for the building should be considered.
- The City is open to having partnerships within the Manor Building. This issue could be considered during community discussions.
- Benches next to the Buckeye playground area would remain.
- Staff is not aware of building foundations being affected by tree roots; however utilities may be affected and should be considered in long term goals.
- The creek in the park is part of a water system that includes Water Dog Lake and dam that need to be considered. The lake does not have a lot of capacity left because it is full of silt. The Public Works Department does have a project identified in their budget to remove the silt but there are a lot of considerations on how that could be accomplished.
- The exterior wall of the Senior/Community Center that is painted "Subtle" appears whiter than expected but it is the color scheme that was selected.
- The City will plant replacement trees for the ones removed in the park using more appropriate species.
- Lighting in the park will be added to the list of issues to consider for the future plans of Twin Pines Park.
- Depending on timing of the Master Plan, long term planning for Twin Pines could be done along with the Master Plan or earlier once the Barrett Ad-Hoc Committee's work is complete.
- Input from groups that use Twin Pines would be collected during the planning process.

- The Historical Society displays a collection of photos at City Hall and staff would welcome a greater presence of the Historical Society in the community.
- There is one grove of trees in front of the Parks & Recreation office that was named after Keith Davey. At one time placards were placed in Twin Pines Park to identify plants and trees in the park. Consideration may be given in the future to an interpretive plan for Twin Pines Park
- Staff would prefer not to install chessboards on the tops of park tables to allow multi-use.

C Block agreed an Ad-Hoc Committee would be helpful to organize ideas. He was also in favor of creating a less than Master Plan, something that allows brainstorming in a cost effective way.

C Bortoli spoke in favor of an Ad-Hoc Committee. He expressed a preference for keeping some of the small barbeque areas and maybe eliminating some when they come into disrepair. He noted the park appears to be losing greenery and hopes that this is temporary due to the season.

C Wong suggested some other structures in the park be painted similar colors to the Senior/Community Center.

YC Fox said she was liked the idea of a trail to provide a safe way to explore the park.

C Michaels agreed an Ad-Hoc Committee would be the right way to go. He proposed the Ad-Hoc Committee cast it as a growth opportunity. He suggested documenting the research and outreach prior to the formation of the Ad-Hoc Committee. He added he believes there should be cohesive fundraising for all the parks. C Michaels noted the utilization of the Community Center at Twin Pines should be considered when determining what is needed at Barrett.

C Sullivan suggested that the area with soil problems in front of the Senior/Community Center be considered to use a central gathering spot. He noted the Book Nook needs to be considered in future plans too. He added the additional seating by the playground is a great idea.

YC Singer spoke in support of bringing out more of the historical items into the Manor House and opening it up to student visits. She also was in favor of displaying student art there.

CC Wright thanked staff for the presentation. She spoke in favor of having an Ad-Hoc Committee to get a sense of what is wanted prior to hiring a professional.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

a. San Juan Canyon Open Space Parkland Designation, Identification and Planning

PRD Gervais reviewed the history of the purchase of the land in San Juan Canyon. The City purchased this land at auction in 2009. A few developable lots were sold to cover the cost of the purchase. The City Council rezoned the majority of the area as open space. A map showing the area designated as open space was displayed. The City Council requested that staff come up with some short term measures to designate these areas as open space.

PRD Gervais displayed photos of the trailhead entrances into the open space area. Currently there is some signage at these sites. Staff is proposing installing regulatory signs, trailhead signs and kiosks similar to what has been installed at other open space trailheads. It is also proposed to put an interpretive panel at the overlook at the Ralston overlook to inform people about the open space.

PRD Gervais acknowledged there are some challenges as these lands are discontinuous and spread out with private land in the middle.

Staff has heard suggestions from neighbors to designate the Marsten lands as open space and staff agrees signage could be posted beside the road but would not recommend a bench as suggested.

PRD Gervais responded to questions from the Commission:

- The types of trail use have not been determined yet. The condition of the trails needs to be reviewed.
- The Bishop portion of the open space has not been designated as open space yet because the three home developments still needs to be worked out.
- There is private land between the two designated open spaces that may be available for sale.
- Items that would be included in kiosks would be regulatory, advisory and community information.
- The new open space zoning district may be applied to other areas when the General Plan is updated.
- Staff is trying to come up with ways to reduce the number of poles for signage.
- The City did little to this area prior to acquisition. After it was acquired the City worked with Cal Fire to clear brush for fire prevention.
- Over time the City may place markers along the boundary of the open space but that would be a large project.
- The number of parking spaces needed is a long term issue.
- Staff could look at the idea of branding the interpretive signs so they all look similar.
- The public roadway near the entrances may need some parking spaces in the long term.
- The zoning district designates what can be installed in open space. There are laws in place that protect the open space from trespassing and damage.

Aileen Turner explained that the open space area was private property owned by absentee owners. Much of the area had been kept up by the community that uses the trails and she does not expect that to change much. People have already been using this trail for hiking, biking and horseback riding. This community did not want to add any burden on the City to maintain these parcels of land.

Michael Schmitz agreed residents are looking for minimal improvement as these trails have already been maintained by the community. They would like signs to designate the trailhead, a kiosk and map. He noted a lot of the trails area not really appropriate for bikes and prefers they be left as walking trails.

Carol Rossi stated she has been a part of the Belmont Open Space Trust, a group that wanted to create some passive open space area for Belmont to enjoy. She noted the uniqueness of Belmont

is having these large pieces of open space and it is fortunate the City could purchase this property. She added this group would be willing to talk to the Commission if they had any questions.

C Block commented that these corridors are important for people as well as wildlife. He noted the connectivity of these properties into other open space areas and the importance of keeping in mind to have these open spaces integrated is important to consider.

C Bortoli spoke in support of the installation of signage and the kiosks at the trailheads but expressed concern that the estimated cost of these items seems high. He suggested waiting to see if the other area gets designated as open space before installing an interpretive sign at the overlook. He agreed the area along Marsten Avenue would not be a good location for benches.

C Wong commented that he would like information on these trails to be promoted on the Parks & Recreation website and other documents so people know about them.

YC Fox spoke in favor of installing the signage and kiosks. She was also in support of adding an interpretive panel.

C Michaels suggested having a checklist on what it takes to absorb the extra 10% of open space including starting costs and continued maintenance. He agreed that the connection of open spaces gives a great opportunity to increase awareness of the site and suggested having docent lead tours and nature activities for children in the open space.

C Sullivan noted the open space is a great point of pride for the City. He expressed hope that more residents visit this new open space.

YC Singer proposed adding some benches on the trails. She also suggested an improved downward path for the steep trail.

CC Wright said she was in favor of having a trail map and making the trailhead signs more positive. She was also in favor of installing a sign at the overlook so more people would become aware of the open space trails. She added if there are docents and interpretive activities it would be great to market it to the schools. She agreed Marsten Avenue would not be a good place for a bench but it would be a good place for an informational sign.

PRD Gervais will present these ideas to the City Council and include the signage along the road on Marsten and having an interpretive program.

VII. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

A. Questions and Comments

PRD Gervais reported the following:

- The City Council agenda of November 26 will include the San Juan Open Space, Renewal of the Tri-City Softball Agreement, and Recreation Programs & Cost Recovery
- There will be a Tree Planting event at O'Donnell Park on December 1st with the 4-H Club.

- A Celebration for the reopening of the Senior/Community Center will be held after the remodeling is complete.
- The Barrett Ad-Hoc Committee continues to meet and hopes to do a presentation to the Commission at the December meeting.

B. Future Agenda Items

Barrett Status
Sports Complex Update
General Plan Update
Park Boosters
Non-Profit Foundation
Summer Program Planning
January Meeting

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:12 p.m.

Jonathan Gervais
Parks & Recreation Director